

M.B.

THE TRADE UNIONS IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST
THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE MENACE OF WAR

(Co-report of J.B.Salsberg to National
Committee Meeting - May 21-23rd, 1947)

Comrade Tim Buck gave us two very important reports. One was a comprehensive and penetrating analysis of the Canadian economic and political situation and the other was a review of the new Europe from which he has just returned. Those complementary reports provide us with an understanding of the main trends in world affairs and in our own country. They also indicate the action that must be taken if the Canadian people are to fight successfully against the disastrous effects of the economic crisis which big business and its governments are heading us towards and if we are to defeat the menace of a third world war.

World reaction, led by U.S.A. imperialism, is engaged in a frantic offensive to turn back the clock of history; to halt the march of democracy and to destroy the labor and democratic forces in their own country. On the other hand, it is abundantly evident that the anti-fascist war brought about profound changes in class relations on a world scale. World imperialism is weaker than it was and the forces of socialism, of labor, of democracy and progress are stronger. The leaders of American imperialism and their supporters and allies in other countries find themselves seriously challenged by the new democratic forces of the world in their efforts to implement their overall plans for world domination. The unity of labor, the alliance of labor and the other democratic people's movements in many parts of the world and the inspiring role played by the powerful Communist parties in Europe and elsewhere justify our confidence in the achievement of a people's and democratic victory in large areas of the globe.

Canadian imperialism plays a prominent role in the post-war offensive of world reaction. Our own imperialist rulers have integrated Canada with the Truman doctrine. Canada's present foreign policies and its military plans dovetail with those of the U.S.A. ruling class. At home, too, Canadian monopoly capitalism, like its older and more powerful partners to the South, is pursuing a relentless offensive against the Canadian people, against the labor movement and against all democratic forces. The spy scare, the red-baiting campaign, the wage and price policy of the government and Big Business and the many-sided attacks on the trade union movement are expressions of this reactionary offensive on the home front.

But, as in the world at large, so also at home many changes have taken place to challenge the policies of reaction. Class relations in Canada have changed considerably. The tremendous industrial expansion increased the army of industrial workers. Canadian labor is more numerous, better organized, more experienced and possesses more prestige and authority than ever before.

When the Canadian bourgeoisie commenced its post-war attack on labor and the people, in order to return to the pre-war relationships, they found unexpected resistance from the Canadian workers and sections of the farmers. The trade union movement, which has doubled its membership since the late thirties, put up a heroic battle on the issue of wages during 1946. Tens of thousands of industrial workers were involved in long and bitter strike struggles during the summer of 1946 and compelled big business to make important concessions. As a result of those struggles, too, the trade unions extended their ranks and won an increased measure of union security.

It is on this background that we, leaders of the party of the working class, must examine the problems facing our Canadian trade union movement. It is not for us to make decisions for the unions nor to force our opinions on the trade union leadership. But we are anxious to help the organized workers to understand the full implications of the problems that now confront them and that will loom before them in the immediate future. We, and all our party members, must give the trade union movement the kind of assistance that will enable it to defeat its enemies; that will strengthen and broaden

its ranks; that will achieve the highest degree of inner trade union unity and that will enable Canadian trade unionism to occupy the central position in the people's struggle against the oncoming crisis and for the attainment of lasting peace. It is with this in mind that we examine the main problems which now confront Canadian trade unionism.

What are these main problems?

A. THE REACTIONARY OFFENSIVE AGAINST LABOR

The overall character of the present situation is that of the offensive which Big Business and its governments are carrying on against the Canadian people, against the trade unions and against all democratic forces in the country. In so far as organized labor is concerned this offensive of reaction expresses itself through the following main attacks.

1. The purchasing power of the workers is being drastically curtailed, their living standards are being undermined, prices rise to the sky, the government's taxation policy favors the rich and, as a result, profits reach new peaks and dividend payments are breaking all old records.

2. As in the USA, Canadian industrialists are also out to shackle and destroy the unions through repressive, anti-union legislation. In E.C. the powerful Canadian Manufacturers Association got the Liberal-Conservative coalition government to adopt the notorious Bill 39 which threatens the very life of the unions of that province. In Nova Scotia the Chamber of Commerce is now operating a most powerful lobby for the purpose of securing similar legislation against the unions on the Atlantic coast. In Quebec the pro-fascist Duplessis government prepared a vicious anti-union Bill which that government was compelled to withhold temporarily only because of the timely reaction of the organized workers of that province who learned of its content in time. In Ontario the reactionary Drew government cynically refuses to enact essential labor legislation. It is waiting for the enactment of the new federal labor bill in the hope that it will be sufficiently repressive to be applied to all industries in Ontario.

In Ottawa the King government has completed its draft for a federal labor act which, we understand, will tie the hands of labor, will restrict the right to strike, will place penalties on unions, will provide opportunities for employers to disrupt unions and which will enable anti-union bosses to demoralize trade unions by the "cooling off" periods which it will call for. It is a bill that will give the upper hand to industry in its dealings with the workers. (The King government has, since then, brought down that bill (338) which more than justified our fears.)

3. While pressing for anti-labor legislation big business is also pursuing an undisguised and ruthless strike busting policy. The experiences of the Nova Scotia coal miners and the Noranda metal miners in their recent strikes and the present struggles of the Lachute textilers and the Chambley rubber strikers in Quebec are indicative of this attempt to starve workers and to terrorize them into submission. In addition we are witnessing a well financed campaign to revive company unionism in a whole number of industries.

4. The scandalous immigration policy which Big Business is carrying through with the sanction and authorization of Ottawa is, essentially, a move to import undemocratic, anti-union elements and to maintain sub-standard wage levels in textile, metal mining, etc.

5. Anti-labor propaganda, red-baiting and the raising of the Communist bogey characterizes the main public activities of the big business strategists and their government spokesmen. The purpose is to alienate public support from labor. The aim is to divide and weaken the unions through the Hitler method of creating anti-communist hysterias and of breaking the unity of the workers. The chambers of commerce, the CMA, the press, radio and countless propaganda agencies are employed to achieve their reactionary ends. Like Hitler they are laying a smokescreen behind which they marshall their forces for the all-out attack on labor, the people and every democratic institution. Reaction also attempts to

demoralize union leaders, to bribe and corrupt them and to utilize weaklings and betrayers, such as Sullivan, to smash organized labor.

B. LABOR FIGHTS BACK

As against this offensive of the monopolists, the trusts and their governments, there are many positive and encouraging developments which we should also take note of.

1. We are witnessing a rising tempo of labor's defensive struggle which expresses itself mainly and quite naturally on the wage front. Canadian workers fought bitterly, militantly and sacrificingly to achieve the victories of the 1946 wage struggles. Not a single important strike was lost since the end of the war.

2. The main bodies of organized workers in Canada did not allow the enemy tactic of red-baiting to split or divide their ranks on that issue. Neither the "spy scare", nor the vile anti-communist propaganda which followed it, nor the red-baiting tactics employed in the Quebec textile strike and elsewhere misled the main body of Canadian workers. The frantic calls of Premier Drew to oust the communists from the trade unions and the similar outbursts of Duplessis, as well as those of the B.C. Chambers of Commerce and of the few red-baiting CCF union officials failed to change the attitude of the overwhelming majority of trade unionists who understand that red-baiting is the thin edge of the wedge in the destruction of the trade unions.

3. Unlike the experiences which followed the first World War, Canadian trade unionism is not declining after the anti-fascist war but, on the contrary, is growing and thousands of new workers are joining the ranks of all trade unions. There is an increase in trade union membership.

4. Canadian trade unions are now taking an increasing part in the rising struggle against high prices.

5. Above everything, it must be noted that we are now in the midst of a new wage movement which far exceeds that of 1946 in breadth. It affects more workers than before and important sections of AFL unions are involved in the 1947 wage movement, as are practically all of the CIO unions in Canada. The railroad workers and those employed in the pulp and paper, building, printing, textile, rubber, metal mining, packing, automobile, farm implements, electric, radio, the garment industry and other industries are involved in the present wage movement. The wage demands this year vary from 15¢ to 35¢ an hour.

6. Whether the present wage movement will lead to strike struggles, as they did in 1946, cannot be predicted. In many industries wage settlements have already been made and current negotiations in a number of other industries will, most likely, lead to satisfactory settlements. Many factors will determine further developments. It would be idle to speculate. The important thing is to guard against a narrow and harmful orientation that "no strikes must take place in 1947" because such an orientation would defeat the wage movement at the very outset. On the other hand, it would be quite unrealistic to base policy on the premise that strike struggles "must take place in 1947". For the purpose of gauging the mood of the workers it is sufficient to take into account the militancy and the perseverance displayed by the striking coal miners in Nova Scotia, the textile and rubber strikers of Quebec and the considerable number of other, smaller, authorized and unauthorized strikes which took place in steel, auto, building trades, etc., to appreciate that there is a high degree of militancy and readiness to battle, whenever necessary, against attempts to lower the living standard of the Canadian workers.

7. Important wage concessions were already gained by large sections of organized workers. In many instances wage increases varying from 8¢ to 20¢ an hour were won by the workers without strikes.

In view of the latter experience some people ask whether the granting of increases without strike struggles does not contradict our estimation of the strategy of big business as one of an offensive against the living standards of the people and its democratic organizations. In reply to this question we state emphatically that there is no contradiction and that the granted wage increases do not belie the correctness of our thesis.

There are a number of reasons why the wage increases were granted. In the first place, big business, in the midst of an orgy of profiteering, would find it extremely hard to justify a flat refusal of the workers' wage demands. (Indeed, in some industries, as in pulp and paper, for instance, the inadequate wage increase is used by the paper monopolies as an excuse for even greater profit-making). The argument advanced by big business and the government a year ago that wage increases will lead to price increases and to inflation - an argument which even affected the thinking of backward sections of trade union leaders - could no longer be advanced in 1947. The magnitude of price increases which have taken place have convinced even the most backward that there was actually no relation whatsoever between the very modest wage increases given to no more than one-fifth of the Canadian workers last year and the alarming and universal price increases which affected practically every commodity. The unparalleled accumulation of profits during the year further destroyed the fallacious arguments against wage demands which big business and Donald Gordon, the former head of the Wartime Prices & Trade Board, advanced a year ago.

In the second place, the strength of organized labor and its display of militancy a year ago caused many top-ranking capitalists to hesitate before allowing a nation-wide wage-strike struggle to develop again. They knew that such a struggle could not but also become political in character and forge an alignment of broad, popular, forces against not only the wage-price policy of big business but also against their entire anti-democratic policy on the domestic and international front. That is also the reason why the powerful big business combination in British Columbia are fearful of the effect which the use of Bill 39 against the big unions in B.C. would have. They have good reason to fear the consequences of such an open comparison of strength.

Because of these and other considerations, big business seems to pursue a policy which, while rejecting wage demands at first and while resorting to all forms of intimidation and treachery, proceeds to make wage concessions which, while inadequate, are calculated to remove the most glaring grievances of the workers, pacify sections of the leaders, remove as much of the militancy as possible, avoid the danger of mass struggles and, while retaining its own economic advantages, proceeds to implement its overall plans.

C. SOME INNER TRADE UNION PROBLEMS

Having taken account of the main factors in the present relations between Canadian labor and big business, we must now examine a few internal problems which confront the trade union movement.

a) Wage and price policy. While it is true that the wage movement is more widespread this year than last there are still those in the trade union leadership who entertain many reservations and who even sabotage the wage movement. They counterpose the struggle against high prices to the struggle for higher wages. The chief exponents of this insupportable policy are a few leading CCF people in the trade union movement. Dr. Forsey, a noted CCFer and head of the research department of the Canadian Congress of Labor, presented a "theory" early in the year to prove that wage increases were impossible within the framework of Canadian economy as of that time. This was a vulgarized piece of formalistic theorizing which even bourgeois economists wouldn't sign their names to. Mr. Millard, evidently basing himself on that "theory", rushed into the public press with an uncalled for assurance to the profiteering steel industry that his union - the United Steel Workers of America - would not raise the wage question during 1947. There are ample proofs that he still opposes the wage movement. He, and a group that shares his opinions, suggest at every occasion that instead of

"going out for higher wages" labor should fight against increased prices.

It should, of course, be acknowledged that the Forsey-Millard position is not shared by all CCF trade unionists, nor even by a majority of them. While those in the latter category do not enjoy Mr. Millard's authority and prestige in the hierarchy of the CCF they are, however, closer to the mood and needs of the workers and they actively participate in the wage movement throughout the country.

To us, of course, it is self-evident that the fight against rising prices does not substitute for the fight for higher wages and that the wage movement does not cancel out the need for a nation-wide battle against high prices. They complement each other. They are part of the same battle against the lowering of the living standards of the people and against the reduction of the purchasing value of the workers' dollar. But we know that the skyrocketing of prices is not an accidental phenomenon, nor is it the result of individual actions of one or another industrialist. The drive for unlimited profiteering is inherent in the capitalist system.

While everything must be done to forge the highest degree of unity of all people in the struggle against rising prices and insatiable profiteering, we also know that the masses of working people, yes, the majority of the population, has already suffered a severe set-back and they can only overcome it by an immediate increase in their earnings while trying to keep prices from soaring even higher. Furthermore, what is also inherent in the anti-working class argument that prices and not wages is the issue at present is the implication that wage rates generally would be satisfactory if only prices were not to rise. One needs little deep thinking to realize how fallacious and harmful such a position is. Wages were too low even before prices began skyrocketing. The workers' share of the national income has been glaringly inadequate; the capitalist share of the national income has been higher in Canada than in most other countries; the need for raising the whole wage level was therefore a cardinal task of the trade union movement even before the present price orgy commenced and any theorizing that wages are not the big question only helps those who always oppose labor's struggle for higher wages.

It is, therefore, necessary to overcome these and other forms of resistance inside of the trade union movement if the wage struggles are to bring the necessary benefit to the working men and women of Canada. Price and wage struggles are not at conflict with each other but are two sides of the same struggle.

b) Co-ordination and Public Action. Another problem which the trade unions of Canada still have to overcome is that of achieving a higher degree of co-ordination in their fight to achieve their major objectives at a given time. Linked with that is the problem of involving the vast trade union membership, their families, and their communities, in public actions that will consolidate public opinion and public support behind the campaigns of labor at any given stage - campaigns which express the needs of the people at large.

The CCL Wage Co-ordinating Committee which was established last year and its public campaign were important steps forward. Though considerably delayed, a similar committee was set up by the CCL to help advance the 1947 wage movement but its public work so far is considerably weaker than a year ago. In the AFL unions even that limited degree of co-ordination and public activity was not achieved. In this regard Canadian labor has much to learn from the British and USA trade unions.

It is common knowledge that Millard opposed the formation of wage co-ordinating committees. It is also known that such CCF union officers as Kidd in Sudbury and Howser in Port Colborne fought the efforts of the Canadian leaders of their own Metal Miners Union to achieve co-ordination among the locals of their union on the wage issue. Nor is it a secret that the main CCF leaders in Ontario found themselves in company with "old line trade union leaders" in opposition to the trade union campaign to compel Drew to enact the bills which the labor members of the Legislature - CCF and LPP - had introduced.

These obstacles to co-ordination of trade union effort on major issues and the development of great public activities by the unions for their achievement can and must be overcome. The rank and file of the unions see the correctness of the unity and action policy. They endorse and participate in it whenever they are given the chance. The vast majority of CCF supporters are in favor of such a policy. Even some CCF trade union officers and many non-partisan trade union officials - among whom are important national figures - also subscribe to what is obviously the logical course for organized labor to take. We must, therefore, help the organized workers to overcome all resistance in their ranks to this policy. We must do it even more effectively than we have done until now.

c) Trade Union Unity. The need for achieving greater unity of Canadian trade unions cannot be over-emphasized. The objective of one all-inclusive Canadian trade union centre remains the goal of all who understand the vital role that trade unionism has to play in the life of the people. But it would be idle to limit ourselves to an abstract agitation for a single trade union centre and justify all present shortcomings with the excuse that little could be done of a united character until such complete unity will be achieved. Such a policy would be paying lip service to unity and used as a cloak for inaction.

After the recent unity negotiations between the AFL and the CIO, Philip Murray made an important statement which emphasized what we have repeatedly stated. In reply to Wm. Green's refusal to engage in joint action in the absence of organic unity, Murray said that unity has to be galvanized in the fires of common struggle against the common enemy.

In Canada, too, we must seek to achieve unity in action between the two main trade union groups at every level. Joint actions on municipal affairs, provincial legislation, strike support to each other, unity in the fight for a federal labor code, unity in the struggle against rising prices, joint labor day and other activities will not only result in important immediate victories of benefit to labor and the people but such actions also pave the way for ultimate organic unity of the two Canadian trade union congresses.

But aside from resistance to united actions which we encounter from those who pay formal tribute to the idea of organic unity, we meet with another, and very dangerous impediment on the road to united action. It comes from those in both groups who engage in raiding parallel unions instead of devoting their energies to the organization of the unorganized. Such poaching on other unions is inexcusable and must be combatted.

The position of the LPP on this question is crystal clear. We are opposed to union raiding, no matter who the raiders are. Our members in the Steel Union defended the United Steel Workers of America when the AFL attempted to raid the Hamilton and London locals of that union, even though we are in disagreement with the main policies and tactics which the Millard leadership is responsible for. In the same way we disapprove of and our members in the unions correctly fight against the unprincipled and destructive raid which the Trotskyite leaders of the CIO Textile Union in Canada have launched against a well-established local of the AFL Textile Union in Toronto. In view of the fact that there are a million unorganized workers in this country it is criminal on the part of any group to engage in the raiding of existing unions. Such actions can only weaken the total strength of organized labor; can only play into the hands of enemies of trade unionism and can only add to the difficulties of achieving united action of all the trade unions which is so essential at the present time.

d) Political Action. It must be acknowledged that the political role of the trade union movement in this decisive period is as yet very inadequate and ineffective. Very little was done in between conventions to bring the trade unions forward as the central, unifying force in the nation in a peoples' struggle for the realization of the peace, social security and expanding democracy program which the conventions laid down.

On the one hand, there are the conservative-minded trade union leaders of the old school who lack an independent working class point of view. Many of these are influenced by and associate with the old capitalist parties. They resist independent political action by the trade unions as they disapprove of any form of working class political action. On the other hand, there are the CCF trade union leaders whose partisanship disarms and demobilizes considerable sections of the trade unions politically. The effect of this atrophying policy of the CCF parliamentarists is to make easier the job of the ruling class to carry through its anti-peoples' program while in no way contributing to the raising of political consciousness and the political strength of labor.

The political action committees of both the CCL and the TLC are wholly inactive. In fact they are non-existent on top. The TLC convention reaffirmed its former decision to affiliate to the World Federation of Trade Unions. But this decision is not as yet carried out. While the CCL is affiliated to that great international body of world trade unions it has done very little to implement the decisions of that body in this country.

There are, however, many signs of vitality and action in many of the unions affiliated to both Congresses and by the majority of unions in certain regions. Every important international and national issue has elicited comment and limited actions from some of the most important unions in the country, from trade councils and, at times, even from the national centres. The resolutions adopted at regional, provincial and district trade union conferences have all expressed a fairly high degree of understanding of the issues that confront labor and the people, both at home and abroad. The activities of the unions in Nova Scotia during the fishermen and the coal strike; the national response to the struggle of the Quebec textilers against the Duplessis terror regime; the developing campaign in Ontario for the enactment of the CCF and LPP Bills in the Legislature; and the very high degree of political alertness and activity of the British Columbia trade unions in the struggle against Bill 39 are indicative of the great potentialities which exist for the involvement of the trade unions in the political struggles of the country as an independent and unifying force. These, and many other recent experiences should cause us to redouble our efforts in bringing the issues clearly before the trade union membership and in helping them to emerge as decisive factors in the peoples' struggles on municipal, provincial and national scales.

There should be less waiting for top leadership from the trade union centres and more initiative down below in developing the trade unions independent political role. The more extensive the development from below will be the more quickly will the trade unions achieve co-ordination and leadership in political action on the higher levels. Our own weaknesses must be acknowledged. Our numerical and political weakness was the decisive reason in the failure of trade unions in Nova Scotia, Quebec and other parts of the country to raise their economic struggles to the political level that was necessary in order to achieve their economic objective and in order to galvanize the trade unions as a more vitally important and stable independent political force in those areas.

D. LABOR MUST GO OVER TO THE OFFENSIVE.

The immediate road ahead for the
trade unions.

Having examined the main political and economic trends at home and abroad and having reviewed the role and problems of Canadian trade unionism and the relationship of forces within it, what conclusions can we come to.

We must conclude that the trade unions which have fought a defensive battle since the end of the war must go over to the offensive on the whole front.

We are certain that the Canadian trade unions can go over to a successful offensive at this time. Furthermore, we are certain that only an offensive strategy will succeed in smashing the overall drive of reaction - a drive which, if successful, will head the country toward an economic crisis and will turn the country into a war arena.

The trade union offensive will actually be the "fight against the looming economic crisis". The program for such an offensive has to include the economic and legislative demands which are basic in the struggle for employment, a rising living standard, social security and peace. Such demands must of necessity be broad and capable of rallying the overwhelming majority of Canadians for its achievement. The fight for a trade union policy to go over from the defensive to the offensive and the development of the kind of public activity that will be necessary to win the battle will, of course, tax certain relationships within the union and will create tensions in unions where the leaders subscribe to theories which negate wage demands or political struggles on the legislative front. But that is unavoidable and will, indeed, be to the good in the long run.

It would seem to us that the minimum trade union program for an offensive policy has to include at least the following:

1. Extension of Wage Movement and Price Struggle.

The wage movement must be broadened and intensified. Unions involved in wage negotiations must try to establish and maintain a high wage pattern and refuse to go below the established pattern.

Since the Canadian unions represent only a minority of workers and employees in the country it is obvious that the struggle for a decent living standard and for adequate purchasing power - the struggle against rising prices - demands that the wage movement be extended to all workers and all employees throughout the country.

Inseparable from the wage struggle, but in no wise substituting for it, is the fight against profiteering and rising prices. The trade unions are already participating to a considerable degree with housewives and consumers' associations in the national fight against high prices. This trade union participation has to be rapidly extended so that all the trade unions will be integrated with this broad, united movement against sky-rocketting prices. Trade union participation in the price battle will not weaken labor's chances to get wage increases but, on the contrary, will provide the broad public and political support that labor requires to win this wage battle.

2. Organize the Unorganized.

The overall struggle against the looming economic crisis and the war menace demands the speediest expansion of trade unionism in the country. It calls for the organization of hundreds of thousands of unorganized workers in industry, in the service trades and in the white collar fields.

The 1946 wage movement brought benefits to only a fraction (one-fifth) of Canada's employed people. The vast majority have received only marginal wage increases and there is still a great area in which no wage increases were granted. This is particularly true in the white collar field.

The possibilities for unionization are better than they have ever been. The unions should, therefore, plan intensive organization activities. Our party, too, should pay attention to this urgent problem and help in the formation of unions everywhere in the country. Our own members should set an example in organizing their plants and offices where no union exists and lead in the organization efforts of their unions. The wage issue is the strongest issue around which to organize the unorganized workers. Wage demands should be raised in these organization drives. Such demands will best rally the unorganized and will result in a raising of the general level of income to the working people.

3. In Defence of Trade Unionism and Democracy.

In the face of the all-sided attack on the trade unions, on the communists and on democracy generally, the trade unions need to launch a most effective campaign to prevent any encroachment on the hard-won rights of labor and democracy.

A nation-wide campaign is necessary against the federal labor bill which the King government is about to introduce. While the full contents of that Bill are not yet known, sufficient information is available to justify the conclusions that the Bill will be harmful to labor and will seek to satisfy Big Business' desire to restrict and weaken the trade union movement. This will require a national struggle jointly undertaken by both trade union centres and extended down to every community. In our opinion a giant national trade union lobby to Ottawa will be required and it would be best if one or the other, or if possible, both trades congresses could present a draft trade union bill of their own around which to rally labor and the people of the country in the fight for a nationally applied labor code and to bring about changes in the BNA Act if necessary to make such legislation possible.

In addition to the federal labor Bill battle, it is necessary that the trade unions of the major provinces, and particularly in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec develop broad, all inclusive campaigns for provincial labor legislation. In BC the trade unions are already entering the fight against Bill 39 - a vicious, anti-union Bill - in an exemplary way. It is impossible to predict at the moment the character that the fight will assume against the Bill in that province. The BC unions can, and we believe they will, unite the people of that province in the fight against Bill 39 in a manner that will ultimately lead to the defeat of the coalition government and to the election of a labor and people's government on the Pacific coast.

In Ontario the growing labor demand for the enactment of the labor bills introduced by the CCF and LPP members of the Legislature also contains the possibilities for an effective anti-Drew movement and for the defeat of the Drew government.

The labor and general reaction to Duplessis' strike-breaking activities in the current textile and rubber strikes in Quebec is indicative of the possibilities which exist in that province for the defeat of that semi-fascist regime, providing the trade union movement of that province gives effective leadership to the people.

In addition to the campaigns for federal and provincial trade union legislation the trade union movement cannot but join hands with other democratic and progressive organizations and institutions in an effort to secure a national Bill of Rights to guarantee every citizen and every labor and democratic organization unrestricted civil and political rights.

III 4. Trade Union Legislative and Political Program to Combat Crisis.

In addition to the wage and price struggle, Canadian trade-unionism must assume leadership in a nation-wide, unified public campaign for the immediate enactment of a minimum program of social legislation. It is a must in the battle against the crisis. Such a minimum program has to include the following:

- a) A dominion-provincial agreement which will provide for the improvement of and the extension of social services, and social legislation.
- b) Labor and the people must insist that Ottawa proceed at once to introduce a national health insurance scheme.
- c) A revision of Ottawa's taxation policies which should provide for the removal of all income tax payments from the low income brackets, the reimposition of the excess profit tax, taxing capital earnings, etc.
- d) The immediate increase of unemployment insurance payments by at least ~~50~~ %.
- e) The reimposition of government subsidies on essentials of life and the reinstitution of price controls on such items.
- f) The raising of old age pensions to a minimum of \$50.00 a month after 65 years of age.
- g) Federal and provincial laws for a minimum wage of 65¢ an hour.

h) Federal and provincial laws for the 40-hour work week without reduction in pay.

i) Workmen's compensation to be brought up to 100% of the worker's earnings and the raising of mother's allowances to provide for a minimum standard of health and decency.

j) The struggle against the crisis, for employment opportunities, etc., would be incomplete without direct trade union participation in a decisive political campaign for a Canadian foreign policy which will lead to lasting peace and which will open unequalled opportunities for large scale exports for the products of Canadian industry and of our national resources. As against the calamitous policy of American imperialism, which seeks to attain military, political and economic domination of the world at the expense of other countries, Canada must develop an independent foreign policy based upon co-operation with the Soviet Union, the new democracies of Europe and the vast, colonial areas where is to be found unlimited markets for agricultural, fishing and forest products and unparalleled opportunities for our automobile, farm implement, electrical, rubber, chemical, steel and other manufacturing industries.

The fight for trade agreements with those countries, for large scale government grants to finance trade between us and them is an essential element in the struggle of Canadian labor for the retention of employment opportunities and for the attainment of a high living standard.

5. The Trade Unions and Political Action.

The problem of trade union participation in the field of political action is still unresolved. Because of those who are opposed to any form of trade union political action and those of the CCF who deny the trade unions an independent role in the political arena the great Canadian trade union movement has not yet emerged as the decisive political factor in the country.

The position of our party on this question, a position based upon a sober analysis of the political situation in the country and the relationships of forces, still is that the Canadian trade unions have a tremendous role to play in influencing the domestic and foreign affairs of the nation through the development of its own independent political action. We believe that such a policy would mobilize not only the trade unionists and their families but would win the majority of the people in support of its proposals and demands on the immediate and long-range issues. We further believe that by the unfolding of independent trade union political action on a high and nation-wide plane Canadian labor could become the keystone of people's unity and achieve a people's coalition capable of defeating reaction and its governments.

We therefore believe that the trade unions can best serve their members by undertaking immediately independent but unifying public political activities based on the wage and price issues; trade union bills, federally and provincially; a legislative program such as mentioned above; peace and foreign trade policy and for the implementation of the program and decisions of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

We believe that in the unfolding of such an independent political campaign and as a result of strike experiences the trade unions may find it necessary and correct to nominate trade union candidates for municipal, provincial and federal offices. Such trade union candidates would not, of course, indicate the establishment of a new political party but would make possible the focusing of public attention on the economic, legislative and political issues which are outstanding at the moment nationally or in a given area and achieve the broadest people's unity around the trade union standard bearers.

We furthermore believe that independent trade union political action of such a broad character would provide the conditions for greater labor unity in the electoral field; it would greatly contribute towards the achievement of single labor candidates in elections and would also help to rally the maximum of labor and popular support behind the candidates best able to defeat reaction and its anti-people's program.

We believe that in the present circumstances and in the present relationships of forces in the country and in the labor movement such a course of independent political action offers the trade unions the only opportunity to emerge as a force to influence the affairs of the nation, to win labor's immediate aims and to help achieve labor and people's unity against reaction.

E. THE LPP AND THE TRADE UNIONS

We are, as a rule, self-critical. That is as it should be. We know some of our shortcomings and are painfully conscious of our numerical weakness. On the other hand, we must appreciate the fact that we are no insignificant factor among the trade unionists and in the trade union movement. The general leadership given by our party and the role of our party members within the trade unions is sometimes decisive. It is, therefore, in the interests of the whole working class that we overcome those of our weaknesses and shortcomings which prevent us from giving greater, more effective and more decisive assistance to the working men and women of this country in their struggle for the realization of labor's overall objectives.

In 1946 it was our party which first signalized the need for raising the income of the Canadian workers. Our party first presented to the Canadian workers a five-point program which later became the program of practically the entire trade union movement. Our party members played a commendable role in the wage struggles of 1946. They were the champions of unity and co-ordination in that struggle. They were in the forefront in the battle for the establishment of the highest possible 1946 wage pattern. And we can say, with justified pride, that unions led by our members were in the forefront of that entire battle and were among those who won the highest wage increases.

This year, too, our party was the vanguard in advocating a new wage movement to offset the inroads made upon the living standards of the people by the policies of government and by the profiteering of big business. While the present wage movement is only now getting under way it is safe to say that our members in the unions will again be in the forefront of labor's battles and will again set examples of militant and constructive leadership.

At the same time we can easily point to situations where important trade unions failed to achieve that which was within their power of achieving and where the broader issues affecting their struggles were either neglected or poorly utilized as a result of our own numerical weakness or as a result of the insufficient political development of our members in those situations. The growth of our party among the industrial workers and the political education of our members is, therefore, the most urgent need for the party and for the labor movement as a whole. We must grow in numbers among the industrial workers of the country. We must also struggle for a higher quality of political thinking and leadership among our members.

We therefore suggest that the party leadership in every province and in every community undertake:

1. An organized and systematic drive to enrol the best trade unionists into the ranks of our party. We set no mechanical quotas but we do ask that the party leadership work out their own realistic quotas in each given case and conduct a campaign to fulfill those quotas within a time limit set by themselves.
2. To plan and conduct political education for our members in the trade unions. This type of education should not seek to duplicate or replace the regular trade union educational activities. Our party educational work among the trade unionists should be of a Marxist character. It must strive to make better Marxists of our trade union members and it should involve all our party members who are active in the unions from the outstanding leaders to the humblest rank and filer. Special classes - arranged to suit the time of our active trade unionists must be immediately organized.

3. We must strive to organize more industrial party clubs. While doing this we must struggle against any tendency to transform such clubs into factions. Our industrial clubs will justify themselves only if they become political organizations who deal with the whole gamut of political problems and of public work which our party is concerned with and engaged in. It is also necessary to organize and conduct these clubs flexibly and not to establish them at the expense of other, already existing party branches nor in circumstances where they are not warranted.

4. Special efforts must be made to develop the reading habit among our trade union members. We must frankly admit that too little is read by altogether too many of our party trade unionists. National Affairs Monthly must be read carefully by all our trade union members. Marxist pamphlets - the classics as well as those issued currently - should be read and studied in our industrial clubs and sold to the workers in the plants and at trade union meetings. The Daily Tribune should be introduced to the tens of thousands of trade unionists among whom our members work. This progressive people's paper will not grow without our active participation in the building of its circulation and without providing it with news and information of the life and struggle of the workers.

5. We must fight red-baiting in all its manifestations. It is true that the Canadian trade union movement, as a whole, has successfully resisted the frantic efforts of reaction to divide and weaken labor through red-baiting and through the raising of the communist bogey. But it would be an error to assume that the worst is over. On the contrary, reaction will intensify its efforts to smash organized labor and to weaken the whole democratic opposition which it encounters in the country. It will, undoubtedly, follow the old Hitler method of raising the communist bogey in order to conceal its overall objectives. Reaction will redouble its efforts within the trade unions as well. It will seek to bribe and demoralize the weaklings in the ranks of labor as it did in the case of Pat Sullivan.

It is, therefore, necessary for us to carry on an educational campaign among the organized workers against the menace of red-baiting. Every trade unionist should be made to understand the basic truth that red-baiting and anti-communism are only the smoke screens which reaction lays down in order to cover its offensive against labor and the people at large. (We intend to issue a special pamphlet dealing with the danger of red-baiting to organized labor and we should try to have that pamphlet distributed throughout the trade union movement).

6. We must make a special effort to win the followers and supporters of the CCF against the red-baiting which some CCF trade union leaders carry on. We must convince them, on the basis of all experiences of labor throughout the world, that those of their leaders who engage in red-baiting are but playing the game of reaction and are serving the interests of the enemies of labor. We must do everything to achieve unity with all honest CCF and non-partisan trade unionists and trade union leaders against the attempts of reaction to divide and destroy the unions and on the basis of a correct program that will serve the interest of labor and the Canadian people.

7. Above everything else we must try to develop the highest calibre of honest, devoted and militant type of trade union leadership from among our members. LPP members in the trade unions - rank and file as well as leaders - should attain, what we call, communist integrity. In other words members of the LPP in the trade unions should be exemplary in their work among their fellow members. They should set the highest standards of honesty, sobriety and dependability among the workers. After all it is our members and those acknowledged communists among the organized workers who make up what is known as the face of the party. Aware of this, every one of our members must so conduct himself as to win the trust and confidence and the support of those with whom he works and those whom he leads. Such a leadership will withstand the attacks of the enemy, will smash the plots of those who seek to destroy labor and will win thousands of new supporters and members for our party. Such a leadership will also constitute the greatest bulwark of defense of trade unionism in the present stormy period.

We confidently believe that the organized workers of Canada possess all the requirements to go over to the offensive and to win the battle against those reactionary forces who threaten us with war and economic crisis. We, on our part, must improve our work, overcome our shortcomings and render assistance to the trade unions which it has a right to expect from the most advanced section of labor - the Marxists in Canada.

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